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graphics accelerator

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A type of video adapter that contains its own processor to boost performance levels. These processors are specialized for computing graphical transformations, so they achieve better results than the general-purpose CPU used by the computer. In addition, they free up the computer's CPU to execute other commands while the graphics accelerator is handling graphics computations.

The popularity of graphical applications, and especially multimedia applications, has made graphics accelerators not only a common enhancement, but a necessity. Most computer manufacturers now bundle a graphics accelerator with their mid-range and high-end systems.

Aside from the graphics processor used, the other characteristics that

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differentiate graphics accelerators are:

- **memory** : Graphics accelerators have their own memory, which is reserved for storing graphical representations. The amount of memory determines how much resolution and how many colors can be displayed. Some accelerators use conventional DRAM, but others use a special type of video RAM (VRAM), which enables both the video circuitry and the processor to simultaneously access the memory.
- **bus** : Each graphics accelerator is designed for a particular type of video bus. As of 1995, most are designed for the PCI bus.
- **register width**: The wider the register, the more data the processor can manipulate with each instruction. 64-bit accelerators are already becoming common, and we can expect 128-bit accelerators in the near future.

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Guide to video accelerators 🚀

Contains a guide to understanding video accelerators and links to the author's choice of the best video accelerator products, and a collection of general reference sites.

PC Guide's video card reference 🚀

In-depth reference information for video cards. Looks at how the video card works in detail and includes sections on: video memory, interfaces, resolution and color modes, refresh, display standards, 3D computing, and performance issues.

Video Cards 🚀

Describes the operation of the video card in general terms, and explains some basic concepts, including the main functions performed by the card. Also contains sections on interfaces, modes, memory, display standards, 3D video acceleration, full-motion video, and performance. This page is from "The PC Guide."

3D Video Acceleration

Describes some of the concepts involved in 3D video, as well as the issues related to the new 3D accelerators on the market. This page is from "The PC Guide."

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3Dfx Interactive home page

Home page of 3Dfx Interactive, manufacturers of the Voodoo line of 3-D graphics accelerator chips.

Guide to 3D graphics cards

This TechTools article provides a comprehensive hands-on guide to 3D graphics cards, including how they work, a shopper's guide, performance and testing information, and list of 3D games.

Number Nine Visual Technology

Home page for Number Nine Visual Technology, designer and supplier of high-performance visual technology solutions, including video and graphics accelerators 128-bit graphics chips, display control software, and high-performance software drivers.

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